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The Ministry of
a Stainless Life

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THE MINISTRY OF A STAINLESS LIFE

A Tribute to the Late President McKinley

COMPLIMENTS OF THE FORT DODGE MESSENGER

Speech delivered by JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER at a memorial meeting held under the auspices of the City of Chicago at the Coliseum, on the evening of Sunday, September 22, 1901.

PRESS OF THE MESSENGER

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The Ministry of A Stainless Life

A Tribute to the Late President McKinley.

Speech delivered by JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER at a memorial meeting held under the auspices of the City of Chicago at the Coliseum, on the evening of Sunday, Sept. 22, 1901

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My Fellow Citizens:

Three days ago, near by the house in which he lived, with a multitude which no man could number, I stood by the grave of William McKinley, and, while among so many voices I would prefer to remain silent, yet I am grateful for the opportunity to join with you in this memorial, and to speak a few words in reverent eulogy of the statesman and the man.

There will be occasion enough to make inquiry into the causes of the enormous offense against mankind of which the president of the United States was the victim. But it cannot be out of the way, even at such a time as this, to recognize that in the midst of modern society there are a thousand forces manifestly tending toward the moral degradation out of which this wicked hand was raised to kill the chief magistrate of the American people. Other presidents of the United States have been murdered, but the men who did the deed bore such obvious marks of a diseased mind that one of them, at least, received the penalties of the law rather than its compassion, only because, in the administration of justice, the line which separates the maniac from the murderer is drawn with a rather clumsy hand.

The government of the United States has given no attention and the government of the several states but little, to the activity in many of our cities of organizations, inconsiderable in

nnmbers. which boldly profess to seek the destruction of all government and all law. Their creed is openly written in many languages. including our own. and its devotees the world over do not try to conceal the satisfaction which they take in these deeds of darkness.

The crime of the 6th of September, though evidently committed under the influence if not the direction of others. easily baffles the courts. because. being without the common motives of murder. it leaves no tracks distinct enough to be followed. and for that reason escapes through the very tenderness of our system of jurisprudence towards persons accused on suspicions. however grave.

A government like ours is always slow to move and often awkward in its motions. but it can be trusted to find effective remedies for conditions like these. at least after they become intolerable. But these remedies. in order to be effective, must not invade the sense of justice which is universal. nor the traditions of civil liberty which we have inherited from our fathets.

The bill of rights. written in the English language. stands for too many centuries of sacrifice. too many battle fields sanctified by blood. too many hopes of mankind reaching toward the ages to come. to be mutilated in the least in order to meet the case of a handful of miscreants whose names nobody can pronounce. Whether the secret of this ghastly atrocity rests in the keeping of one man or many we may never know. but if the president was picked out by hidden counsels for the fate which overtook him. there is a mournful satisfaction in the fact that in his life. as well as in his death. he represented American manhood at its best.

I have studied with some degree of care such literature as the working creed of anarchy has given to the general public. and in all the high places of the earth it could not have chosen a victim whose life among men has made a more complete answer to its incoherent program of envy and hatred and idleness and crime. Without intending to do so. it has strengthened the whole framework of the social system. not only by showing its own face. but by lifting up before the eyes of all generations this choice and master spirit of our times. simple and beautiful in his life. lofty and serene in death.

The creed of anarchy in common with all kindred schools of morbid social science teaches that only the sons of the rich find their lives worth living under our institutions, and therefore, in order to emancipate the poor, these institutions must be overthrown. The biography of William McKinley records the successful battle of one young man in the open arena of the world, and tells the story of his rise from the little schoolhouse, where he earned the money to complete his education, to the highest civic position known among men. One life like that put into the light of day where the young men of America can see it, will do more for the safety of society than all the processions that ever marched through the streets of Chicago, carrying red flags, can ever do it harm.

The creed of anarchy knows no country, feels in its withered heart no pulse of patriotism, sees under no skies the beauty of any flag — not even ours, that blessed symbol now draped in mourning which lights even this time of national affliction with the splendor of the great republic.

William McKinley, long before he came to man's estate, was taught what the flag means: that it is worth fighting for, and if need be, dying for: and he laid down his school books, gave his name to an enlisting regiment, and before the age of 20 was a seasoned veteran in the broken ranks which we saw bent with years, marching as a guard of honor to his grave. He did not win a very high renown, if honor be measured by the commissions which he brought home, but he earned them all on the field of battle, and he is promoted now to be an immortal comrade of Grant and Sherman.

The creed of anarchy rebels against the state, and with incredible folly proposes that every man shall be a law unto himself. It is more mischievous because more pretentious than the common levels of crime, for without disdaining the weapons of the ruffian it does not hesitate to seek shelter in the respectability that belongs to the student and the reformer.

It ought not to be forgotten that these conspiracies, working out their nefarious plans in the dens and caves of the eatth, enjoy an unconscious co-operation and side-partnership with every lawless influence which is abroad in the world. Legislators who betray the commonwealth, judges who poison the fountains of

justice, municipal authorities which come to terms with crime—all these are regular contributors to the campaign fund of anarchy.

That howling mass, whether in Kansas or Alabama, that assembly of wild beasts, dancing in drunken carousal about the ashes of some negro malefactor, is not adding to the security of society: it is taking away from society the only security it has. It belongs to the unenrolled reserve corps of anarchy in the United States. Neither individuals, nor corporations, nor mobs, can take the law into their own hands without identifying themselves with this more open but hardly less odious attack upon the fortress of the social order. The words which came spontaneously to the lips of William McKinley as he sank under mortal wounns and saw the infuriated crowd pressing upon his assailant, ought to be repeated in the ears of the officers of the peace from one end of the land to the other, in all the years that are to come—"Let no one hurt him; let the law take its course."

The creed of anarchy teaches that popular government is a fraud and that enactments made by the people for themselves are no more sacred than arbitrary decrees promulgated by tyrants and enforced by bayonets. Professor Ely, in his work on the labor movement, preserves this expression from the editorial page of the chief organ of anarchy in the United States.

"The republican party is run by robbers and in the interest of robbery; the democratic party is run by thieves and in the interest of thievery. Therefore vote no more."

Each proposition is an infamous lie. Yet nobody can deny that the sensational press of both parties has contributed enough to the volume of current scandal and hearsay to make these infernal slanders acceptable to all enemies of the human race.

Anarchy says "Vote no more." The example of William McKinley, who in a public service of more than a quarter of a century, half of it in the heat of controversial politics, never once disparaged the motives of those who differed from him, nor spoke an unkind word of an opponent: who allowed neither the cares of business nor the fatigues of travel to nullify his influence as a citizen, and never failed at any election to stand uncovered before the ballot box in the precinct where he had

the right to vote, has familiarized his countrymen already with the higher ideals of civic duty which dedicate the heart and brain and conscience of America to an intelligent interest in public affairs.

The creed of anarchy despises the obligations of the marriage contract, impeaches the integrity of domestic life, enters into the homes of the people to pull down their altars and subject the family relation, which is the chief bond of society, to the caprices of the loafer and the libertine. In all these things it has an alliance implied if not expressed with every variation of that rotten public opinion which in many American states has turned the courts of equity into a daily scene of perjury and treason against the hearthstones of the community; a treason so flagrant that a year ago, for the accommodation of a single man the legislature of Florida was induced to descend below the level of all paganisms and all barbarisms by so amending the law of divorce as to permit a winter resident to legally desert the wife of his youth, not on account of any fault of hers, but because of the pathetic burdens which she bore.

I count it of infinite value to every decent form of civilization that against this background of unworthy living, from the front porch of a little cottage covered with vines yonder at Ganton, the outline sketch of two lives has been thrown, so perfect in their fidelity to one another that good men everywhere stand in silence before it, while the womanhood of the world, seeing the knightliness of love which alters not, draws near, from stations high and low, to salute the picture with the benediction of its tears.

The fatal word in the creed of anarchy is "atheism." Until that word is spoken, until all sense of the moral government of the universe and the spiritual significance of human life is lost, it is impossible to conceive, much less to execute this malignant propaganda against the rights of mankind. It is not necessary to think or speak unkindly of the noted men, many of them living lives of scholarly seclusion remote from the practical, every day problems which confront the police of all countries, who in the last generation have made the most influential contributions to the speculative literature of atheism. I doubt whether their influence will be permanent, either for good or evil.

No man who brings nothing with him except a blind faith in natural laws, which nobody made, and nobody administers, will ever find a permanent discipleship in a world like this. It is a misfortune that their works have had the most influence among those who have been least able to understand them.

I look upon it at least as a passing disadvantage for us that they have been translated into the language of common life by a famous American, now dead and gone, who in the days of his strength was the most captivating popular orator who ever spoke our tongue. On taking the chair as president of the American Secular Union he uttered these words: "Away with the old nonsense about free moral agency: a man is no more responsible for his character than for his height: for his conduct than for his dreams." It requires no very deep investigation to find in such a sentiment the seed of all anarchies, beginning with explosions in the streets of Chicago and ending with chaos come again.

As I have heard the prayers which have been offered and the sermons which have been preached beside the dead body of William McKinley, I have felt more and more the consolation which comes from knowing that if indeed his assassination was an incident of the standing challenge of atheism against the peace and order of society it could not, now that Gladstone is no more, have chosen a sacrifice more fit to illustrate the nobility of human character, nurtured in the fear of God and educated from the cradle in the law of Christ. The new national hymn which came to the hearts of the American people from the chamber where the good man died, instantly brought to my mind lines which I heard him utter many years ago in a political speech when referring to the enlistment of the Union army.

"How near to grandeur is our dust,
How close to God is man:
When duty whispers low, Thou must!
The youth replies I can."

A long acquaintance with the late president, in the intimacy of a personal friendship which ended only with his life, saves me from that error of judgment which in some quarters underrated his abilities and underestimated the value of his public services; but standing here, before yet the wreaths have withered which cast their fading beauty upon his grave, I declare my solemn belief that no achievement of his great

career, no victory of his epoch-making record at our capitol will weigh so much for the welfare of the world as the everlasting ministry of the stainless life which he lived in the faith of the mother who taught him first to repeat the words of the Master, "Thy will be done."

You have read the masterpiece of prose fiction, how Jean Valjean an outcast from the faces of men and the kennels of dogs, came one night to the house of a Christian bishop, not a mere titled official of the church, but a man into whose face when he was asleep came the divine light of a pure heart. "Monsieur Cure," said the man, "you do not despise me; you open your house for me; you light your candles for me, yet I have not concealed from you my name or where I came from and how miserable I am." "Sir," said the bishop, "this is not my house, it is the house of Christ. It asks no man whether he has a name, but whether he has an affliction. Besides, before you told me your name I knew it." "What," answered the man, "you knew my name?" "Yes," answered the bishop, "your name is 'My Brother.'"

The other day, after the cortege had passed after the vast procession, with its pomp and ceremony, had gone its way and the night was coming down, I thought I would go back myself to the place where they had laid him and look at the flowers, which not only hid the tomb, but illuminated the whole landscape around it; and as I stood there in the twilight and the shadows fell heavier about me, there kept running through my mind a strange saying out of the old Hebrew Scriptures, which I had never understood before: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain;" and I could not help believing that the day is drawing nearer than we think, when this distracted world shall know, and what is better, shall feel within itself, in its literature, in its laws, in its politics, in the investment of its capital, in the performance of its daily labor, in the triumphs of its learning, in the progress of the arts which have been touched by the white fingers of its genius, that the earth upon which we walk, once pressed by the weary feet of the workingman of Nazareth, is after all only the house of Christ, and every man's name "My Brother."

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